



PSC NEWS

Missouri Public Service Commission

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PSC URGES CONSUMERS TO ACT NOW TO CONSERVE ENERGY THIS WINTER

Jefferson City (October 7, 2004)---The winter heating season is right around the corner. With natural gas prices expected to increase compared to last year, the Missouri Public Service Commission urges consumers to act now to conserve energy and reduce heating bills.

“Natural gas bills are predicted to be more than 10% higher this year than last,” cautioned PSC Chair Steve Gaw. “Comparing the projected bills for this winter to what customers paid during the winter of 2001-02, consumers could be looking at natural gas bills that are 60% or more above what they paid in 2001-02. That is a big concern,” added Gaw.

The wholesale cost of natural gas (the cost your local natural gas company must pay to its suppliers for natural gas) is not regulated by the Missouri Public Service Commission. Wholesale prices are determined in an open, competition-based market and are subject to wide variations depending on a number of factors including supply, demand and the weather. Recent industry reports point to a tight market based on supply disruptions from recent hurricanes, potential increases in demand and the potential for colder-than-normal winter weather.

While the weather is still warm, now is the perfect time to consider energy saving tips in and around your home.

*Have the furnace checked and tuned-up if needed and replace furnace filters each month when dirty.

*Consider contacting the local natural gas company to ask about budget billing, which spreads total energy costs over a 12-month period. Budget billing amounts may be adjusted at various times during the 12-month period.

*Add attic insulation if necessary. Heat rises and without adequate home insulation, that heat will quickly leak outdoors into the atmosphere. Some consumers may be eligible for weatherization assistance.

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*Place weather stripping around doors, use plastic film covering and caulk windows to keep heat from escaping from your home. Close fireplace dampers when the fireplace is not being used.

*Have the chimney checked for blockage.

*Place an approved insulated cover-jacket around your hot water heater. Set your water heater temperature to 120 degrees.

*Use caution with gas-fired appliances. Get professional help for any projects that are beyond your personal capabilities.

*Assess whether it is time to replace your furnace with a more efficient appliance.